

REMARKS

Receipt is acknowledged of the Office Action of March 21, 2005. Claims 1-14 are currently pending in the application, Claims 15-20 having been cancelled by the present Response. Claims 1-20 have been rejected in the Office Action. Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner and request reconsideration of the rejection, as explained in more detail below.

Claims 1-14 were rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. 112 as allegedly being unclear because "the term 'large' in claim 1 is a relative term which renders the claim indefinite." Applicant amended Claim 1 to recite the limitations of "a plurality of asymmetric pressure generated grooves being formed on one of an outer surface of said shaft and an inner surface of said bearing sleeve, said asymmetric pressure generating grooves generating an excess pressure displacing a volume of lubricating fluid" and "at least one fluid channel, said fluid channel comprising a diameter corresponding to said volume of lubricating fluid displaced due to said excess pressure."

As described in paragraphs [0047]-[0051] of the present specification, the excess pressure generated by asymmetrically shaped dynamic pressure generating grooves causes the shaft 14 to raise. As is obvious to any person skilled in the art, raising of the shaft 14 squeezes out lubricating fluid located above the expanding portion of the shaft or the thrust plate. As described in paragraph [0045] of the specification and shown in Fig. 2, equalizing fluid channels 49 are provided in the thrust plate or the conical extension 42 to allow the liquid squeezed above the thrust plate or the conical extension to flow to the gap 58 below. Fluid channels 49 have a

larger diameter than equalizing channels of a conventional design to accommodate the fluid squeezed out due to the excess pressure.

Based on the above, amended Claim 1 is believed to be patentable. Further, Applicant respectfully submits that dependent Claims 2-14 are believed to define patentable subject matter in view of their dependency upon allowable Claim 1 and, further, on their own merits.

Claims 15-18 were rejected in the Office Action under 35 U.S.C. §102(e), as allegedly being anticipated by Yoshikawa or Wolff et al. Claims 19-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103, as allegedly being unpatentable over the same references. Applicant cancelled Claims 15-20 of the present Application.

In view of Applicant's cancellation of Claims 15-20, Applicant deems it unnecessary to answer the Examiner's Request For Information with respect to "means for generating pressure."

With respect to the Examiner's requirement to elect a single disclosed species for prosecution on the merits, it is unclear from the Office Action which patentably distinct species were identified by the Examiner in Claims 1-14. In the Office Action Summary, the Examiner indicated that all claims are subject to the election requirement. However, the body of the Office Action only identifies the species found in the cancelled claims 15-20. Therefore, a further clarification is required to properly respond to the election requirement.

The Examiner is urged to telephone Applicant's undersigned counsel at the number noted below to resolve the election requirement issue over the telephone. The counsel is prepared to make the election during such telephone conference. Further, the Examiner is urged to telephone Applicant's undersigned counsel if it will advance the prosecution of this

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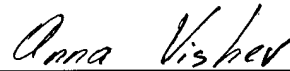
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application, or with any suggestion to resolve any condition that would impede allowance. In the event that any extension of time is required, Applicant petitions for that extension of time required to make this response timely. Kindly charge any additional fee, or credit any surplus, to Deposit Account No. 50-0675, Order No. 057517-11.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: June 21, 2005



Anna Vishev
Reg. No. 45,018
Schulte Roth & Zabel, LLP
919 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10022
Tel. (212) 756-2167